

COLLECTED POEMS

Books by Veronica Forrest-Thomson

Poetry

As Veronica Forrest

Identi-kit (London: Outposts Publications, 1967)

Twelve Academic Questions (Cambridge: privately printed, 1970)

As Veronica Forrest-Thomson

Language-Games (Leeds: New Poets Award 2, School of English Press,
University of Leeds, 1971)

Cordelia: or 'A Poem should not Mean, but Be' (Leicester: Omens
Poetry Pamphlet no. 2, 1974)

On the Periphery (Cambridge: Street Editions, 1976)

Collected Poems and Translations (London, Lewes, Berkeley: Allardyce,
Barnett, Publishers, 1990)

Selected Poems (Brighton: Invisible Books, 1999)

Literary Criticism

Poetic Artifice: A Theory of Twentieth-Century Poetry (Manchester:
Manchester University Press; New York: St Martin's
Press, 1978)

VERONICA FORREST-THOMSON

COLLECTED POEMS

*Edited, with notes and variants, by
Anthony Barnett*

Shearsman Books
in association with
Allardyce Book

This edition published in the United Kingdom in 2008 by
Shearsman Books Ltd
58 Velwell Road
Exeter EX4 4LD

in association with
Allardyce Book imprint of
Allardyce, Barnett, Publishers
14 Mount Street, Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1HL
to whom rights enquiries should be addressed

ISBN 978-1-905700-80-6

Copyright © Veronica Forrest-Thomson 1971, 1974.
Copyright © Jonathan Culler 1976.
Copyright © Jonathan Culler & The Estate of Veronica Forrest-Thomson
1990, 1999, 2008.
Editorial matter copyright © Anthony Barnett 1990, 1999, 2008.

The Estate of Veronica Forrest-Thomson hereby identifies her as the author of
this work in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.
All rights reserved.

All but three of the poems in this volume were previously published in
Collected Poems and Translations (Allardyce, Barnett, Publishers, 1990). Three
of the poems were gathered in *Selected Poems* (Invisible Books, 1999).

Typeset in Aldus, with Greek in Minion.

Cover typography by AB©omposer

CONTENTS

Editor's Note	9
---------------	---

POEMS

Identi-kit

January Morning	13
Gemini	14
Taurus	15
Identi-kit	16
In the Greenhouse	17
Aries	18
Point of View at Noon	19
A Reaction to Rings	20
Clown (by Paul Klee)	21
In This House	22
Christmas Morning	23
Provence	24
Ambassador of Autumn (by Paul Klee)	25
The Sentence	26
Contours—Homage to Cézanne	27
According to the Script	28
Through the Looking Glass	29
Subatomic Symphony	30
Automat	32

Uncollected Early Poems

The Room	35
Sagittarius	36
Still A-Building	37
The White Magician	38
Literary Historian	41
Social Contract	42
The Needle's	43

Beginners Please	44
Epicurus	45
Don't Bite the Hand that Throws Dust in Your Eyes	47
Grapes for Grasshoppers	48
Computer 97/100 DV	49
Habitat	50
<i>fine</i>	51
Landscape with Yellow Birds	52
Atomic Disintegration	53
<i>At Work: / At Play:</i>	54
2 Staircase Poems	55
Catalog	56
Language Lesson for a Schizophrenic Age	57
Tooth	58
1,28	59
Fêtes Nationales & Zazie in the London Underground	61
The Blue Book	63
Letters of Ezra Pound	64
Epitaph for an Un-Named Priestess	65
Individuals	67
Variations from Sappho	68

Language-Games

Michaelmas	73
The Brown Book	75
Ducks & Rabbits	76
Zettel	77
Acrostic	80
Idols of the (Super)Market	81
Antiphrasis	83
Antiquities	85
Group Theory	87
The Hyphen	88
Alka-Seltzer Poem	89
Three Proper	90
Two Other	93
Criteria for Continuing a Series	94

Notes to Chapter 1,002	95
The Further-Off-From	96
Phrase Book	97
A Fortiori	98
It Doesn't Matter about Mantrippe	99

On the Periphery

In Defence of Leavis: The Common Pursuit	103
In Defence of Graham Hough: Style and Stylistics	103
The Transcendental Aesthetic	104
To R.Z. and M.W.	105
On Naming of Shadows	106
Selection Restrictions on Peanuts for Dinner	108
For the Spider who Frequents Our Bath	109
L'Effet du réel	110
An Arbitrary Leaf	111
Pfarr-Schmerz (Village-Anguish)	112
The Dying Gladiator	113
Drinks with a Mythologue	114
Address to the Reader, from Pevensey Sluice	116
On the Periphery	117
The Aquarium	118
On Reading Mr. Melville's Tales	119
Approaching the Library	120
Leaving the Library	121
Facsimile of a Waste Land	122
Pastoral	123
Not Pastoral Enough	124
Le Signe (Cygne)	125
Conversation on a Benin Head	126
The Ear of Dionysios: Ode	127
Le Pont traversé: Ode	130
In Memoriam Ezra Pound	132
Strike	134
The Lady of Shalott: Ode	136
The Garden of Proserpine	138
Sonnet	141

Further Poems

A Plea for Excuses	145
Since the Siege and Assault Was Ceased in Troy . . .	146
<i>I have a little hour-glass</i>	148
<i>I have a little nut-tree</i>	148
In Memoriam	149
Canzon	150
Cordelia: or, 'A Poem Should not Mean, but Be'	152
Richard II	158
S/Z	160
Lemon and Rosemary	162

Appendices

1: An Impersonal Statement	164
2: Contributor's Note	165
3: Note to <i>Language-Games</i>	165
4: Preface to <i>On the Periphery</i>	166
5: Richard II	168

Bibliography & Recordings

A: Dissertation & Published Literary Criticism	170
B: Published Letters	171
C: Personal Tributes to the Author	171
D: Sound Recordings	172

Notes	173
-------	-----

Index of Titles	185
-----------------	-----

EDITOR'S NOTE

This volume reprints all the poems, except translations, by Veronica Forrest-Thomson in her *Collected Poems and Translations* (1990) with the addition of three early poems discovered since then, which were included as an appendix to her *Selected Poems* (1999).

Here, as in the 1990 edition, *Collected* means all poems published previously as books together with all those uncollected poems published in periodicals or similar, or deposited in a public archive, that have been traced. Also included are a number of apparently unpublished poems taken from the manuscripts and typescripts that remain among her personal papers. Not included are early poems, apparently unpublished in her lifetime, written before the poems gathered in her first volume *Identi-kit* (1967): a selection of such poems will be found under the title 'Poems of Youth' in *Adam International Review*, vol. xxxix, nos. 391–393 (London, 1975). Nor have later apparently unfinished drafts or fragments of poems been included.

Before the publication of *Language-Games* (1971) the author published her poems under the name Veronica Forrest. An exception is the poem 'Reaction to Rings' published under her full name (which she chose to hyphenate, contrary to family practice) in the *Glasgow Herald*, 10 September 1966.

Veronica Forrest-Thomson was both a poet and a critical theorist. A bibliography of her literary criticism is included here. There exists among her personal papers a typescript dated 'c.1963', with manuscript additions dated 1966, in which she sets out her ideas, projects and purposes for poetry. She wrote several commentaries to accompany the publication or public reading of her poetry; the 'Note' to *Language-Games* and the 'Preface' to the posthumously published *On the Periphery* have been removed from their original positions in those volumes and brought together with related pieces in the appendices.

Obvious errors in transcription or in printing have been corrected silently in those poems that have been published previously. *Selected Poems* corrected a number of typos in *Collected Poems and Translations*. Most were not mischievous but *Identi-Kit* for *Identi-kit* was. In preparing this new *Collected* further typos were found, including a couple carried over from the author—'Agammemnon',

surely. It cannot be said with certainty that others have not been overlooked or accidentally introduced. Notification of such will be gratefully received.

The author's idiosyncratic use of the hyphen, greatly important to her, has been respected. Accurate formatting of some poems has not always been easy to determine or to adhere to. Where there are doubts about the author's intentions, her typescripts, where available, have usually been the guide; otherwise, if clarification seemed necessary, details will be found in the 'Notes' to this volume. Some published variants are also described, and sources given for them as well as for previously uncollected poems. For other poems, periodical publication generally has not been noted.

This volume attempts to gather all the author's mature poetry but it is possible that a few other poems are still to be discovered. For example, only two issues of the Liverpool University poetry magazine *Equator*, some or all the issues of which were edited by the author, have been traced. Some extant letters with typescripts or manuscripts have proved inaccessible, so it cannot be ascertained whether unknown poems or variants are to be found there. This edition differs from the earlier *Collected* in respect of ordering. There, the decision was taken to position early poems at the end of the book. Here, the ordering is, more or less, chronological.

Collected Poems and Translations and *Selected Poems* contain acknowledgements to all those who generously assisted with the preparation of those volumes. My renewed thanks to them and my apologies that, but for one, their names are not repeated here.

I would like to thank Jonathan Culler, executor of the author's literary estate, for his graciousness in allowing me to prepare this new edition of Veronica Forrest-Thomson's poetry.

Anthony Barnett
Lewes, April 2008